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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2318  
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RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0038  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0022  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0068  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0035  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0037  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0338  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0354  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0077  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 000817

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [FI](#)  
SUBJECT: FINLAND SEEKS TO CONTRIBUTE 200 TROOPS TO UNIFIL

REF: SECSTATE 134133

Classified By: Polchief Gregory Thome, Reasons 1.4 (b and d).

11. (SBU) Finnish MFA Secretary of State (D Equivalent) Pentti Torstila told Ambassador Ware Aug. 15 that Finland will seek to provide up to 200 additional troops for enhanced UNIFIL operations in Southern Lebanon. Confirming public comments made by President Tarja Halonen, Torstila explained that the GOF's annual PKO budget (roughly USD 100 million) has already been appropriated for 2006 and largely committed for 2007; therefore supporting Finland's UNIFIL contribution will require a special authorization from Parliament. However, the GOF is confident of Parliamentary approval and hopes the troops could be made available no later than October.

12. (SBU) Torstila agreed with Ambassador that the international community must now unite behind a second UNSC resolution that authorizes UNIFIL to enforce the provisions of UNSC Resolution 1559. Finland, which currently has soldiers in Lebanon and recently lost an officer when an Israeli airstrike hit a UNIFIL position, has no illusions about the how difficult it will be to disarm Hezbollah. Torstila underscored the need for the UN Security Council to move quickly to give UNIFIL a very strong "peace enforcement" mandate. Currently, he said, UNIFIL has "failed to do its job" because of a "vague" mandate inadequate for the task at hand.

13. (C) Finally, Torstila acknowledged that the larger EU member states must demonstrate leadership by making significant troop contributions to UNIFIL. Because of the lead role France has taken (along with the US) at the UNSC -- as well as France's overall military capacity as compared to other EU states -- the French "have to take a strong role." However, he expressed some concern that the French have suddenly become reluctant to share information with EU partners regarding their potential UNIFIL role and contributions. "Most of my information on French thinking comes from newspaper reports," he noted with some frustration. Germany's response thus far has also been disappointing, and Torstila pointed to the Israeli Prime Minister's personal efforts to assure Berlin that "historical factors" between Germany and Israel are no issue and German

troops would be welcome. Although individual EU member states will make their own national troop contributions to UNIFIL (as opposed to EU troops under ESDP), the GOF is still planning, in its EU Presidency capacity, to discuss UNIFIL troop contributions with Germany, France, Italy and its Nordic partners in the coming days.

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